
**PROGRESS ON THE DARLINGTON KEY STAGE 2 TO 3 SCHOOLS
TRANSITION PROGRAMME**

Purpose of the Report

1. This report outlines the existing provision and planned developments for school pupil transition from Key Stage 2 to 3. It also outlines early proposals for widening the scope of transition and recommendations for further research into the length of the transition period.

Summary

2. In Summer 2008, 11 Transition Action Groups (TAG) were initiated in order to improve the transition experiences for pupils in Darlington moving from their primary to secondary school phases. This report includes progress in each of these areas but also how a number of the TAG areas were coalesced to make the work more meaningful. One TAG area has had significant impact in schools and evaluation of the project "One Book for Darlington" will be completed in the Autumn term 2009. Improvements were also needed in the transfer of pupil assessment data via the common transfer process, and this period saw the first implementation of this process in schools.
3. In November 2008 Darlington LA held a transition conference for a wide range of stakeholders including schools and the Local Authority, discussing focussed issues and with inputs from a variety of sources. Some of these included updates from the Transition Action Groups (TAG), with inputs on Language transition and assessment through an offshoot of the transition programme the "Assessing Pupil Progress (APP) pilot". This report contains recommendations from the work of the transition groups where most progress has been made

Recommendation(s)

4. It is recommended that:-
 - (a) Members note the content of the report and comment on the existing and proposed activity.
 - (b) Members respond to the pupil input panel to scrutiny committee on 14th September 2009 on a range of themes relating to how we can 'change our world'.

**Murray Rose,
Director of Children's Services**

Background Papers

5. In addition to report is attached the transition project used in all schools this year called "One Book for Darlington". This booklet gives background to the work of the pupil panel who will bring their findings and questions to the scrutiny committee in October.

S17 Crime and Disorder	There are no direct implications arising from this report
Health and Well Being	Having a good transition process in place should have a positive effect on children's health and wellbeing as it will support their transfer to a new setting
Sustainability	There are no direct implications arising from this report
Diversity	There are no issues relating to diversity
Wards Affected	All
Groups Affected	All children and young people
Budget and Policy Framework	There are no direct implications arising from this report
Efficiency	There are no direct implications arising from this report
Key Decision	This is not a Key decision
Urgent Decision	This is not an urgent decision
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	Easing the transition from primary to secondary education is one of the key work strands in Aspiring Darlington

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

Existing provision and planned developments

6. For this programme “transition” is defined as the transfer (physical movement of) and progress of pupils from Key Stage 2 to 3. Clearly this is not the only transition point, so for example the transitions from early years to KS1 or from KS3 to KS4 are also important phases in a young person’s life in education. “Transfer” can include the passing on of important information such as assessment data, and it also alludes to the kinds of things that can affect pupils emotionally and socially as they make the move into the secondary phase. “Transition” can also mean how well pupil progress throughout a Key Stage.
7. The goals of the Transition Strategy are varied, and are aimed at fulfilling a number of expected outcomes. When pupils move from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3 this is the most common transfer point where large cohorts of pupils move from primary to secondary schools and was clearly a good starting point.
8. The initial TAG development areas were : 1) The development of a yearly transition plan for all schools; 2) Producing a Darlington transition booklet for all pupils; 3) Developing pupil-friendly anti-bullying information; 4) Improving e-communication for pupils and parents so that each has access to a transition website; 5) Developing the curriculum resource “One Book for Darlington”; 6) Developing the use of Summer schools; 7) Developing the induction and transfer experience, from induction days, weeks, common transfer and transition experiences thru’ eventually to exploring early Y6 transfer; 8) Producing a pen portrait of each child prior to transfer so that each secondary school can see who’s who; 10) An annual transition conference and 11) Improving the link with parents.
9. The TAGs are made up of teachers from both the primary and secondary phases, working together and alongside other LA personnel.
10. Over the first year of developing the programme it became clear that a number of these groups needed to merge in order for progress to be more marked. The production of a booklet and the website became one in the same thing, although there is still a need to produce a booklet for all families that summarises the access to different school and corporate websites. Similarly, aspects of the TAG group work on e-communications became merged with the pen-portrait work and the development of the website. In all this meant a reduction to 7 groups that are each at different stages of development.

Summary of Progress in the TAG groups

11. ***Improving e-communications / developing yearly transition plan / website / induction and transfer experience***
Data transfer arrangements for the ends of each academic year are now improved. A data transfer protocol was agreed by delegates of the transition conference that would be adopted and implemented. This has reduced the burden of repeated data transfers, improved the meeting of deadlines by schools and the LA performance team, and has resulted in smoother transfer of progress information on pupils and consequently an improved run-in time for more effective transition planning.
12. The transition website is currently undergoing changes and updates so that parents can gain access to schools websites with embedded pages on transition. In these links will be included the results of the work carried out with pupils describing their experiences of

transferring to their new secondary schools. These are now vid-casts of pupils whereby parents and pupils can access the experiences of pupils transferring from all feeder primary schools to their secondaries. These vid-casts are being uploaded onto school websites. This work was celebrated in a presentation event at the Education Village, involving all participating Y7 students. This was attended by all but one school, and pupils and headteachers listened to presentations from Murray Rose, Rob Thompson and Stepan Heghoyan (the TAG leader for this work). Each pupil received a certificate and a book entitled “Change the World for a Fiver”, the forerunner of the book used in the transition project “One Book for Darlington”.

13. At the transition conference in November 2008 one of the consultation workshops included the move to increased time for transition days through to possible transfer of Y6 pupils in June. This resulted in a mixed response and indeed seemed to polarise the groups working in these workshops. Some could see the range of advantages of transferring Y6 pupils early in terms of curriculum continuity and progression, whereas others saw the experiences of Y6 pupils post-SATs as one of the ‘rites of passage’ in moving from the primary to the secondary phase. The model for early transfer has occurred for one school in Stockton and has been successful, although the parallels with the Darlington set up are not strong in that each secondary school in Darlington has a number of feeder primary schools. This compounds the difficulties in arranging for Y6 pupils to transfer early to Y7 unless all schools agree to do this. One secondary school (Longfield) has now submitted a paper to the Local Authority on the benefits of early transfer. This has been considered by a range of stakeholders within the LA and is likely to feature more fully at the next Transition Conference in the Autumn term 2009.

14. ***Pupil-friendly anti-bullying information***

This booklet has been completed and is accessible through both our corporate extranet and via our transition webpage.

15. ***Annual Conference***

There have been 2 annual conferences since the transition commission started and each has been well attended from a range of stakeholders in the town. Themes in November 08 were ‘early transfer’ (see above), ‘the role of parents’ and ‘curriculum continuity’ (see below in further developments). For the 2009 conference the theme of parental involvement with come more to the fore, along with themes such as continuity in pupil assessment, the impact on progress of vulnerable groups and ‘narrowing the gap’, 1:1 tuition, and a deeper look at the early transfer model proposed by Longfield school.

Both conferences have yielded vital information and consultations on how best to proceed with development areas that would have the biggest impact on improved transition and transfer. They have informed the re-direction of some of the themes namely:

Curriculum continuity. There is a need to continue and widen the developments already made in the APP (Assessing Pupil Progress) cross-phase transition group. (see below).

‘One Book for Darlington’. The ‘One Book’ theme, once evaluated, will evolve further into a view of pupil progress development in transferable skills. The view was noted that bolt-on activities that rely on an end of Y6 start and moving the activity through to the start of Y7 have a limited impact. The ‘One Book’ project will be evaluated in September 2009.

16. ***Developing the use of Summer Schools***

The TAG group leading in this area met to discuss ways forward in July 2009 and will report on progress in September. The scope of their work will look at the range of Summer schools happening already, the link between secondary school specialisms and summer school themes and curriculum continuity. The Summer schools pilot groups will implement these changes in Summer 2010.

17. ***Developing the curriculum resource “One Book for Darlington”***

This TAG group was led by John Armitage (deputy head at North Rd. Primary school). They devised transition activities to be carried out across the town based upon the book “Teach Your Granny to Text and Other Ways to Change the World” (see attached booklet). The book brings together ideas from young people from all around the UK of the simple, everyday action they would ask one million people to do to change the world. Such things range from ‘walking your dad’, ‘read with a pal’ and ‘don’t start a war’ and are designed to promote literacy and communication skills in young people with the added dimension of small activities that can change your world. Since the ‘08 transition conference where it was agreed that we would have 2 common transition days in June, schools have planned to carry out common activities based on this text. One such activity was for each Y6 pupil to take a map of their world (home environment) to discuss with their new tutor group in Y7. The focus of the discussion would be ‘what is important to you about where you live?’ Another activity was for pupils to share pen portrait movies of themselves with the rest of their group. It is also proposed that the activity should result in Y6/7 pupils visiting the scrutiny committee in the Autumn term of 2009 as part of the Local Democracy Week in order to quiz the committee on a range of ideas generated by the ‘One book’ project.

18. The resource is the starting point for future work on developing cross-phase transferable skills and curriculum continuity, especially since the advent of the Rose review and its impact on the new Primary curriculum. The ‘One Book’ project will be evaluated in September 2009 and the report will inform the next steps in developing curriculum continuity and be further supported by schools commissioning (see next steps below).

Next Steps for Transition Development

19. Evaluate the impact of the ‘One Book’ project and use findings to inform the commissioned project brief on curriculum development. This is a cross phase development.
20. Widen the scope of the APP pilot work to a new cluster of schools. The first pilot group included Skerne Park, Mowden and Hummersknott. The next phase will include Longfield and associated feeder primary schools.
21. Explore further the notion of transferring Y6 pupils into the secondary phase in June of each year. This consultation is likely to occur at the Autumn conference.
22. Improve the linkage between LA processes for transition and the role played by parents. This involves work in the localities as a proposed shared priority across the town.
23. Introduce commissioned groups in the LA to develop links in pupil progression from Y6 to Y7, including 1:1 tuition, progression of vulnerable groups e.g. SEN groups, LAC and pupils with Free School Meals.

Outcome of Consultation

24. Not applicable.